

2025-26 Alternative Assessment Justification

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Justification and Assurances for Exceeding the 1.0 Percent Cap

Purpose

In accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(c), local educational agencies (LEAs) contributing to the state exceeding the 1.0 percent cap must submit a justification and assurances.

1. Select LEA Name and ID#

310 - Grundy County

2. Enter the Last Name, First Name of the individual submitting this form.

Morrill, Kelly

3. Identify your role within the LEA. Special Education Director

- a. Special Education Director
- b. Special Education Coordinator
- c. Other

ELA Participation Rates for School Years 2020-21 through 2025-26

4. **ELA Participation Rates 2020-21** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* *

1.45

5. **ELA Participation Rates 2021-22** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* *

1.21

6. **ELA Participation Rates 2022-23** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* *

1.52

7. **ELA Participation Rates 2023-24** *Note: Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* *

0.86

8. **ELA Participation Rates 2024-25** *Note: Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* *

0.63

9. **ELA Participation Rates 2025-26** **2025-26 is an estimated participation rate using LEA assessment provisioning data.* *

0.71

Math Participation Rates for School Years 2020-21 through

10. **Math Participation Rates 2020-21** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* *

1.4

11. **Math Participation Rates 2021-22** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* *

1.09

12. **Math Participation Rates 2022-23** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* *

1.49

13. **Math Participation Rates 2023-24** *Note: Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* *

0.84

14. **Math Participation Rates 2024-25** *Note: Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* *

0.46

15. **Math Participation Rates 2025-26** **2025-26 is an estimated participation rate using LEA assessment provisioning data.* *

Science Participation Rates for School Years 2020-21 through 2025-26

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

2

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

0.99

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.53

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

0.86

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

1.07

21. Science Participation Rates 2025-26 *2025-26 is an estimated participation rate using LEA assessment provisioning data. *

0.71

Number of Students Scoring

To calculate: Log into KITE - Reports - Alternate Assessment Reports - Year 2025 - LEA Name and select the .PDF file. The first table in the report provides the number of students scoring Advanced by grade and subject. Calculate the total number of students scoring Advanced for each subject.

22. In school year 2024-25, list the total number of students scoring "Advanced" for **ELA**. *

0

23. In school year 2024-25, list the total number of students scoring "Advanced" for **Math**.

0

Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility:

Criterion One

In this section, describe the processes in place to ensure the IEP team is making informed, data-based decisions aligned to the alternate assessment participation criteria. Please note that completion of the Alternate Assessment Worksheet in TN PULSE alone is not sufficient evidence.

Criterion One: The student has a significant cognitive disability. Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should be considered for the alternate assessment.

You must also describe the process for reviewing alternate assessment eligibility for any student scoring Advanced in at least one subject. Advanced performance scores may indicate that the student's skills exceed the eligibility criteria and should prompt a review of the student's continued participation in the alternate assessment.

In the questions below, describe the process used to ensure the IEP team considers only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (approximately 1.0 percent of the student population).

24. How are IEP teams informed of the criterion and expectations for determining if the student meets expectations for participation? *

IEP teams meet and determine this without the school psychologist in attendance. Our lead teachers usually confer with the school psychologist when they believe the team may want to consider having a student take an alternate assessment versus the TCAP. This usually entails at the very least, a discussion of the student's cognitive and adaptive behavior skills and the implications of continuing a student in the alternate assessment path.

25. What data are used to make the determination (e.g., cognitive and adaptive behavior data)? *

The cognitive assessment is generally either the results from a WISC-5 or UNIT-2 administration. In some cases, a student needing the alternate assessment may not even be able to complete an individually administered cognitive assessment. Adaptive behavior is usually measured by the ABAS-3 either teacher or parent form.

26. How is adaptive behavior data incorporated into the decision-making process? *

Adaptive behavior is an integral piece of the decision-making process, as a student must have both significantly low (below 70) cognitive scores (in all areas) and significantly below same age peers in all areas of adaptive behavior.(below 70).

Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility: Criterion Two

In this section, describe the processes in place to ensure the IEP team is making informed, data-based decisions aligned to the alternate assessment participation criteria. Please note that completion of the Alternate Assessment Worksheet in TN PULSE alone is not sufficient evidence.

Criterion Two: The student is learning content linked to (derived from) state content standards. All students, regardless of the assessment or the least restrictive environment (LRE) should receive standards-aligned instruction that is rigorous, meaningful, and sufficient in duration to increase student outcomes. Special education services are provided in addition to, not in place of, standards-based instruction.

In the questions below, describe the evidence used to ensure the student was provided access to grade-level, standards-aligned instruction. This should include an explanation of the process used to ensure the student received instruction aligned to grade-level standards at an appropriate level of rigor, intensity, and duration comparable to their peers.

27. How does the IEP team ensure the student's performance and skill level are due to a significant cognitive disability rather than an instructional disadvantage? *

During the IEP meeting, GCHS students who are alt. assessed, discussions are held with the parents examining the standards of each diploma option. The parents along with the team make the call as to what diploma option is best for the student. The HMI teacher has a copy of all alt standards and is to be teaching to those standards for those that are receiving the alt diploma. Discussion among regular education and HMI teachers takes place to determine the level of support needed in the general education classroom.

Paraprofessionals are used within the general education class setting as a means of leveling the playing field to provide the needed level of support for success. Inclusion in regular education classes is a high priority and is supported by the GCHS staff. The team would review cognitive and adaptive behavior assessments. They should consider informal assessments, progress made on goals/objectives.

28. What data are used to make an informed determination? *

Data to support decision of Alt placement: State rubric, Psy testing results, teacher observation, teacher input, progress monitoring data, parent input, parent observation, general education observations, general education input. Data Reviewed: IQ below 70 Adaptive measures life skills: Language, reading, writing, math Social: interpersonal skills, following rules Practical: personal care, safety, mobility Response to interventions, work samples, observations Impacts learning in all settings: school, home, community Individual or group administered tests

Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility: Criterion Three

In this section, describe the processes in place to ensure the IEP team is making informed, data-based decisions aligned to the alternate assessment participation criteria. Please note that completion of the Alternate Assessment Worksheet in TN PULSE alone is not sufficient evidence.

Criterion Three: The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.

In the questions below, describe the process used to determine that the student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports.

29. What data are used to support this determination? *

Parent and student input - account of independence or needs at home in community Progress monitoring for growth or lack of progress The school psychologist reviews each student's scores in order to determine whether he/she meets the standards for Alternate Assessment. During the IEP team meeting for students who are in 2nd through 12th grades (unless the student has completed End of Course or Alternate Assessment), the team discusses the option of whether a student should take the TCAP, End of Course, or Alternate Assessment.

30. How do IEP teams determine the type and level of supports needed, including for students whose least restrictive environment (LRE) is a highly modified special education setting for all or part of the day? *

Work samples Review of previous level of prompting, support Self-help skills, level of independence Grundy County's Exceptional Education Lead Teachers, school psychologist, and speech/language pathologists have been trained on the criteria for Alternate Assessment and inform the teams of the change in trajectory for a student's learning when Alternate Assessment is chosen for a particular student.

31. How does the IEP team distinguish between supports required due to the student's disability and supports that are available as part of the instructional environment? *

Each student's individual needs and abilities are considered. Cognitive and adaptive ability help the team determine what the student is capable of doing independently. Support should be provided to help the student acquire, maintain, and generalize skills across different settings. The team members consider the 3 criteria as referenced in Tennessee's eligibility determination process as well as a student's cognitive and adaptive functioning.

Disproportionality

Using data by primary eligibility (disability) category and demographic groups, describe LEA patterns of participation in the alternate assessment, including any disproportionate participation and a plan for reducing or eliminating disproportionality. Include a description of the LEA population demographics as compared to statewide demographics.

32. Describe any identified disproportionality in alternate assessment participation and the LEA's plan to address and reduce disproportionate participation, as applicable.



*(For example, if the LEA student population is evenly distributed among White, Black, and Hispanic students, the alternate assessment participation data should reflect a similar distribution across those groups.) **

Informed Parent Participation

Students who participate in alternate assessments are significantly less likely to earn a traditional diploma due to the highly modified content and potential for lower expectations.

In the questions below, describe the processes and practices used to ensure parents are fully informed of the eligibility requirements and implications of alternate assessment participation.

33. How are parents informed of the eligibility criteria and implications of participation? * Parents are always included in the academic planning for their child who receives exceptional education services in Grundy County. The Exceptional Education Lead teachers (case managers) send written invitations for meetings at least 10 days in advance. School team members make every effort to meet at a time convenient for the parents, so that parents can be involved in planning for their child's educational program. They also send out multiple invitations, if they do not hear back from a parent/guardian regarding an invitation. They try to contact the parent by phone (and/or email) when needed.
34. How are parents included in the IEP team decision-making process? *During meetings, the school team members are engaging parent input and acknowledge requests. We welcome their input regarding his/her child's educational program, consider assessments, and criteria to discuss with families as we, as a team, make decisions about the child's educational program.
35. Participation in the alternate assessment must be reviewed at least annually. Students may transition to the general assessments at any time, as determined by the IEP team.

What processes are in place to ensure these decisions are fully discussed and reviewed at least annually? *Parents are always included in the academic planning for their child who receives exceptional education services in Grundy County. The Exceptional Education Lead teachers (case managers) send written invitations for meetings at least 10 days in advance. Discussion and decisions occurs during the IEP meeting.

Ensuring Students Are Making Academic Progress

In *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, the U.S. Supreme Court clarified that an IEP must be "reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances." Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education denied the state's 2024-25 waiver request, noting that it did "not find that approving the waiver will advance student academic achievement, as required in section 8401(b)(1)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)."

Thus, LEAs that contribute to the state exceeding the 1.0 percent cap must provide assurances that students participating in alternate assessments are provided access to and engagement in standards-based instruction and are making appropriate academic progress.

36. Describe the policies, procedures, and practices used in your LEA to ensure students are provided instruction that meets the requirements set forth by ESEA and *Endrew F.*, and that students make appropriate academic progress.*

The exceptional education department meet to discuss the three criteria.

Progress reports are sent quarterly to families with IEP's. Starting July 2026, the Ex Ed-department will review the three criteria and the PowerPoint created by Alison Gauld to review procedures, policies, practices and expectations. Starting in 2026 there are quarterly calendar stop and checks for students who are currently alternate assessed. We, as an exceptional ed team and the families will discuss if alternate assessment (using criteria 1-3) is best practices for the child.

Support Requested

37. Please describe any support needed from the department to assist in meeting the requirements outlined in this form. All reasonable

requests will be considered. * I believe we need a state training for all three criteria for alternate assessment. The training provided form the state of expectations, policies, procedures, and allows a clear and concise foundation moving forward. Being new to the role, and making decision in this role, a training combines and clarifies old and new thinking. We have five exceptional education teachers with two being new exceptional lead teachers. for the 2026 school year.